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GOVERNOR ROOSEVELT'S radio speech of July 30 was little more than a reading of the Democratic platform. When the Governor did essay his own interpretations and opinions he revealed for the most part a lamentable lack of any genuine economic understanding. The most hopeful sentences in his address were those promising lower tariffs and pointing out the inherent absurdity in the Republican position of demanding payment of the war debts while at the same time making payment impossible. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Roosevelt went on to remark that if tariffs were lowered the war debts would no longer be a problem, which of course is not true; and even in denouncing the tariff he conceded the heart of the protectionist position when he repeated the silly argument that it is high tariffs that maintain our living standards. He indorsed the idea of an international monetary conference, but showed no signs of understanding the implications of such a conference. And he was guilty of some serious misrepresentations. When he accused the Republicans of not reducing the war debt at a sufficiently drastic rate before 1929 he attacked them at perhaps their one point of strength, for the war debt was consistently reduced at the unparalleled rate of about one billion dollars a year. And when he accuses the Administration of resorting to "the type of inflation which has weakened public confidence in our government credit" it is difficult to know what he means. All of the recent measures that could properly be described as inflationary have had Democratic support, and most of them, like the Goldsborough bill, the Glass-Steagall bill, and the Glass bond-secured currency bill have been either sponsored or chiefly voted for by Democrats.

IS PRESIDENT HOOVER merely playing smart politics in turning the Reconstruction Finance Corporation over to his political enemies on the eve of a national election? Or must we look elsewhere for his motive in selecting Atlee Pomerene, former Senator from Ohio, for one of the vacancies on the board of the corporation, thus giving the Democrats majority control? If the Reconstruction Corporation should accomplish everything its sponsors, including Mr. Hoover, have so grandly promised, the Republicans naturally would not care to share the resultant glory and publicity with the Democrats. Hence this effort to shift responsibility for the success or failure of the Hoover relief project to the shoulders of the Democrats suggests that failure of the relief program is anticipated, or else it must be feared in Washington that the Reconstruction Corporation may find itself involved in further scandals similar to that attending the $80,000,000 Dawes loan. Probably no more effective way of shutting off an investigation of the Reconstruction Corporation's activities could have been devised. Certainly the Democrats will not be over eager to inquire into the affairs of a body whose control rests in the hands of members of their party. In any case, it is just a trifle too naive to believe that Mr. Hoover would be willing, were he at all confident that the Reconstruction Corporation was proving a popular success, to pass on any of the credit for its success to his political foes.

THE CAMPAIGN BIDS FAIR to be remarkable for one thing. It looks as if a candidate for the Vice Presidency would really focus some attention upon himself. Indeed, it looks as if Mr. Garner might prove to be one of the issues. The Republicans see in him a vulnerable point in the Democratic line, in more ways than one. He himself has invited their attack because he has gone out of his way to slash at Mr. Hoover, for whom he obviously has no respect whatever. There is to us nothing attractive about Mr. Garner. In our judgment he weakens his ticket by his tactics, and his desire to make capital by attacking the "reds" is the clearest proof of the weakness of his mentality and the narrowness of his intellectual range. At least, however, it is refreshing to have him speak right out in meeting and squarely pin to Mr. Hoover his complete absorption in saving banks and railroads instead of interesting himself in saving the starving American. Indeed, from his talks it is obvious that Mr. Garner may be a pretty ugly customer after he gets on the stump. It will be at least refreshing if one of the four candidates will speak out and hit straight from the shoulder, even if it must needs be as unsympathetic a figure as Mr. Garner.

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES of the minor parties will probably be barred from the ticket in Ohio next November through a series of amendments to the election laws which the legislature enacted three years ago. Only an aroused public opinion and immediate and effective action through the courts will serve to put the names of Norman Thomas, William Z. Foster, and other minor-party candi-

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dates on the Ohio ballot. The Socialist Party of Ohio, though its funds are running low, is conducting a vigorous campaign toward that end. Presidential electors, the Ohio Department of State has ruled, can only be nominated by "the delegates to a State convention." However, these delegates must first be elected at primaries, and under the Ohio laws only voters of recognized political parties, that is, Republicans and Democrats, may participate in such primaries. Thus the Socialist candidates appear to be legally barred. Even if this obstacle could be overcome, the Socialist ticket would still, under the 1929 amendments, have to be supported by petitions signed by no fewer than 300,000 registered and qualified voters. The Socialist Party of Ohio is now seeking the necessary 300,000 signatures, and *The Nation* urgently requests its friends and readers in that State to help in this campaign for the sake of establishing equal rights as between the political parties. Though they must take their fight to the courts, the Socialists feel that if they can obtain the needed signatures that fact will make a tremendous and perhaps convincing impression on the State and legal authorities.

IF THE ECONOMIC CONFERENCE to which the League of Nations has now invited the United States is finally convoked, it seems likely to set a record, assuming that it adheres to the terms of the invitation, as the most futile and farcical of all the international conferences of the last decade. The conference is to meet on the official understanding "that the questions of reparations, of debts, and of specific tariff rates (as distinguished from tariff policy) will be excluded." It is to meet, in short, only if the delegates agree not to utter a word about the three most vitally important measures that a world economic conference could discuss. Perhaps the distinction between tariff rates and tariff policy may turn out to mean something; more probably it will mean merely that the conference will agree on some pious general declarations which will bind no one. The conference will discuss "monetary matters," and the United States is assured that "within its scope will be the question of silver." Thus Senators from the silver States are placated. But what will, what can, the conference decide about silver? If it merely attempted, as has been hinted, to encourage the increased use of the metal as subsidiary coinage, then it would be sanctioning the clear economic waste of using silver where paper would do better. If it actually proposed a bimetallic standard, which is the only other real alternative, then the moment such a proposal seemed likely to receive serious consideration there would be a raid on the gold reserves of every country still on the gold basis that would promptly throw every one of them off. The statesmen who are calling and discussing the conference have thus far given no evidence that they have the remotest notion of its probable implications or effects.

GERMANY IS DETERMINED to increase its armaments, even to the extent of violating the Versailles Treaty, if the other nations do not soon reduce their military and naval forces to comply with the pledges given to the German delegation at the Paris peace conference. This warning was issued by General von Schleicher, Minister of Defense, who is the real power behind the present Berlin Government. Such action had been hinted at before by the German press and by German delegates at the various disarmament conferences in Geneva, but heretofore the government has always sought to smooth over the diplomatic storms which followed the suggestion that Germany intended to rearm. The latest threat from Von Schleicher quite naturally disturbed Premier Herriot and the French foreign office. They addressed a number of formal protests to Berlin, expecting perhaps that the same diplomatic denials would be forthcoming. But for the first time since the war the Berlin foreign office stood fast; it declared very frankly that Von Schleicher had the full support of the government. This decision was bound to come not only because a militaristic regime now rules Germany, but because the German people long ago lost their faith in the hypocritical disarmament pledges of the other nations. For this France must bear a large share of the responsibility. The unceasing French cry for "security before disarmament" has been the chief stumbling block, at least in Europe, to execution of the provision in the Versailles Treaty for reducing all armaments to the levels forced upon Germany by that treaty.

IN OUR MELLOWER MOMENTS we have been expecting apologies to emanate from the participants in the arms conference at Geneva; but the only one that has come to our notice is that of Eduard Benes, spokesman for Czechoslovakia. According to the Associated Press, in one of the closing sessions Mr. Benes "made a public retraction and apology for his assertion two days ago that bombardment from the air is barbarous and inhuman." This graceful entre' acte was staged, it appears, "on the complaint of the British Air Ministry, which asserted that British flyers never had been guilty of barbarous actions." Now in our naive fashion we had actually worked ourselves up into believing that modern aerial warfare was a bit uncivilized if not downright indelicate. We feel immensely relieved. Our chief discomfort now is a patriotic one. In their development of nice and considerate bombs, which have none of the horrible messiness of the aerial equipment of other countries, the British have stolen a march on us. It fairly burns us up to realize that when an American airman drops one of our old-fashioned bombs on, say, a Sandinista hospital in Nicaragua, it puts our airmen in a reactionary light. The late Lord Thompson once declared, in answer to a disturbed questioner at a meeting of the Foreign Policy Association in New York, that when dealing thus with recalcitrant native populations, the Air Ministry was careful to blow up only revolutionaries. The only thing to do is to turn over all future jobs of bombing to the British, whose selective bombs in Irak, the Northwest Frontier of India, and elsewhere have supremely qualified them to perform the rite of pacification.

IF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY LEAGUE succeeds in its drive to reduce the yearly federal expenditure for the Veterans' Bureau by $452,000,000, the American taxpayer as well as the organization itself will be in line for congratulations. As we have repeatedly pointed out, the claims upon the government by veterans who have become disabled in the pursuits of ordinary life have mounted to a menacing degree. Our approval of this phase of the League's activity is qualified, however, by the fear that the movement may go on to assail all efforts at drastic taxation in the higher brackets designed to pay for essential social services.

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It is preposterous for Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, who is directing the campaign, to declare that our local, State, and federal taxes have "already reached the point of confiscation"; we can imagine what amusement such a reckless remark would excite among our British cousins, who know what taxation really is. Nor can we agree with General Harbord, another leader in the crusade, when he says that not only the Eighteenth Amendment, but "the tariff, the foreign debts, are for the moment incidental and subsidiary to the fight against mounting taxes." We strongly suspect that most of the League's moving spirits have been distinctly inconspicuous in the struggle to cut down sharply our shameful waste in armaments.

WELL, THE RED SCARE, which we have all been expecting as part of the Hoover general staff strategy, is well under way. Not only did the President try to explain his ruthlessness with the bonus army on the ground that its members were being unwittingly influenced by Communists, but we have in the same week dispatches from various portions of the country to the effect that wicked Communists are at work trying to destroy the banks of the United States by starting lying rumors about them. A raid in Pontiac, Michigan, produced, according to the police, correspondence to show that the occupant of a room was a party to a widespread conspiracy to destroy the credit of the nation's banking institutions. This undoubtedly clears up the whole mystery of why it is that we had some three thousand bank failures in 1931 while Canada did not have a single one. It is Moscow's fiendish brain which, with ghoulish glee, is at work in our midst. As our readers are well aware, every bank in the United States that failed has been honestly, ably, and in every way correctly managed, and in not a single case have the bank officials been derelict, or have the institutions been borne down by the evil influences of the depression. Thanks to the vigilance of the police and the Department of Justice, the reputation of our bankers is now spotless beyond question. Our congratulations go out to the valiant detectives who are not only balking the miscreants from Moscow but are vindicating a much-maligned group of American business men.

THAT BRAVE INDIAN, Vice President Curtis, recently sped across the country to Los Angeles to open the Olympic Games. At Las Vegas, according to the United Press, "Armed guards protected Vice President Curtis today as he sped to Los Angeles by rail after police arrested six persons in the crowd that watched him leave." Hecklers interrupted Mr. Curtis, and one of them shouted, "Why didn't you feed some of those ex-soldiers?" Vice President Curtis, it will be remembered, was the one who first had the courage to summon troops to combat the bonus army in Washington. They were ordered back, to be sure, at the insistence of General Glassford, who thought they were not necessary, and it remained for Mr. Hoover to prove that Curtis was right when he himself issued the call to arms which finally routed the invaders of Anacostia. We are glad to report that Chief Charles met the Las Vegas question with the same courageous finality. His reply was: "I've fed more than you, you dirty coward." Obviously, being Vice President is not as funny as Morrie Ryskind and George S. Kaufman think it is.

The End of Hitler?

WILL Adolf Hitler's smashing victory in the Reichstag elections ultimately prove his undoing? Reports on the voting of July 31 show that his National Socialists have won 230 seats, more than twice the number they had in the Reichstag elected two years ago. This gives the Hitler movement the largest representation any party has had in the German parliament since the republic was founded. But it does not give the fascist leader enough votes to control the government. Even with his Nationalist allies he lacks a governing majority. Hitler may now attempt to seize power by revolution, though this is exceedingly doubtful, for the time for direct action has apparently passed. Moreover, Hitler himself has repeatedly declared that he means to set up his dictatorship only by "legal" means. It appears, therefore, that the fascist leader must now either join a coalition with the Hugenberg Nationalists and the Catholic Center or refrain from entering the government, allowing the Van Papen Cabinet to remain in power through his sufferance.

By remaining outside the government, playing only a passive part in the affairs of Germany during the next few months, Hitler's influence would be largely negative. True, the large bloc of fascist votes in the Reichstag could be used as a club to hold over the present regime, but there are not enough fascist votes to put into effect any part of the Hitler program. And the fascist party is a party of action. It has grown fat on Hitler's extravagant promises. If its leader now fails to produce concrete results, fails to take energetic action leading to early improvement in the German economic situation, the party may very quickly turn upon this false messiah. On the other hand, if Hitler elects to enter a Nationalist-Catholic coalition, he will presumably be permitted to join only on terms laid down by former Chancellor Brüning, leader of the Catholic Center, without whose votes no coalition government can be erected. There is little doubt that Brüning would accept nothing in the Hitler program except that which is economically and politically sound. In brief, the greater part of that program would be unceremoniously rejected. But this again would mean that the action which has been promised the fascist voters would not be forthcoming. Hitler's impressive victory in the Reichstag elections virtually commits him to action; but, short of adopting violent measures, there is no way in which he can effectively act. Will the impoverished middle classes continue to follow his unproductive leadership much longer?

Even with Hitler's wings clipped the danger for Germany would not be over. The Von Papen - Von Schleicher regime has no votes in the new Reichstag. It might be willing to give way to a coalition government which it could dominate, but it may be doubted that it would retire for any other reason. General von Schleicher no less than Hitler means to rule Germany. He is probably willing to do so with the consent of the Reichstag and the cooperation of the moderate and nationalist parties, but if this cooperation is withheld and the Reichstag decides to oppose the present regime, that would in our opinion simply bring about another dissolution of the parliament, this time perhaps without provision for new elections.

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Cowardice and Folly in Washington

WE should be the last to deny that a government must seek to keep order and that the challenge of the appearance of the Bonus Expeditionary Force in Washington was a serious one. But there are good and bad methods of handling every situation, good and bad police actions, wise and stupid, kindly and brutal ways of removing each and every menace to public order. According to our information from eye-witnesses, the bloodshed and forcible expulsion of the veterans was due both to folly and to cowardice. From the very beginning General Pelham D. Glassford, a retired regular officer who is the superintendent of police, has shown courage, intelligence, and sound common sense in handling the bonus army, and has been actuated also by commiseration for the desperate plight of the men who assembled in Washington in the exercise of their constitutional right to assemble and to petition for a redress of their grievances. If General Glassford had been given a free hand we should never have witnessed such incredible scenes as took place in Washington—seven hundred and fifty regulars, with tanks, tear-gas, and all the paraphernalia of war, brutally and ruthlessly running some 10,000 veterans out of town, burning their pitiful shacks, and incidentally gassing innocent civilians, newspapermen, detectives, without the slightest consideration for the plight of these destitute thousands after their eviction.

Obviously somebody blundered and blundered badly. Given a weak and timid man in a difficulty of this kind, and he is bound to be the first to turn to ruthless use of power, the first to do the wrong thing—and Mr. Hoover is both weak and timid. What was it that brought about the bloodshed on the day it happened? There had been weeks of tolerance; then great vacillation on the part of the commissioners of the District of Columbia who issued orders to evacuate the veterans and then revoked them and rode roughshod over General Glassford. On the day before the trouble, Wednesday, July 27, there was a sudden consultation in the White House with Secretary Hurley and Secretary Mills present, and action was decided upon. The troops were all in readiness about the sacred White House and the eviction began, with the results known. Even before that the White House had announced that it was considering the declaration of martial law and of calling out the army, but no one believed that this would be done until General Glassford had been allowed to try to move the men out.

Instead, the President, using as his excuse that the presence of the men was delaying the demolition of this property "necessary in order to extend employment in the District," issued his orders. At the very moment when, after consultation with the police, the commander of the veterans was trying to induce his men to go quietly, the White House turned a simple evacuation of a few half-demolished buildings into what the Baltimore *Sun* editorially describes as a "pitiful and brutal conflict between desperate homeless men and saber-swinging cavalry, with tanks in reserve"; as "a movement for the complete and ruthless clearing out of the whole 'army' from the District, the mild 'conservatives' and the 'radicals' alike." The President, in his afterthought, declares that there were many Communists and men of criminal records among the veterans who misled these innocents "unaware of the character of their companions." But if this was the case, why had not the police removed the criminals long ago? As a matter of fact, neither the presence of criminals nor Communists had worried General Glassford. Indeed, that officer immediately gave an interview in which he said: "I handled the situation for nearly two months without bloodshed. In carrying out orders issued this morning I am sorry to say that they resulted in the death of one man, serious injury to another, and injuries to several policemen." The orders, of course, came to him from above. With the same sympathy and commiseration which has moved him from the beginning, he declared that the only result of the army's action was that the veterans "will still be on the police, but not so well-handled." He is the only official who has expressed even the slightest concern as to what may happen to the unfortunates who are now without any place to lay their heads, or any possibility of sustenance. It would seem, if there is any humanity left in Mr. Hoover, that he would at least call upon the Red Cross to take these victims of official ruthlessness in hand. We admit, of course, that they are not the victims of an act of God; none the less, there must be some humanitarian agency which could take care of these men before they become really desperate.

As it is, no official statement can conceal the fact that the higher officials of the government lost their heads. And so, for the first time in our history, police and troops fired on and bombed their fellow-Americans in the streets of the capital. Indeed, if further proof of the state of nerves of the government is needed, we can cite the official statement of General MacArthur, Chief of Staff, who was so silly as to say that if President Hoover had not acted, "another week might have meant that the government was in peril"! Yes, our great American Government—not that of Colombia, or Salvador, but *ours*—was actually within a week of falling because of the presence in Washington of some 8,000 or 10,000 homeless, half-starved, unarmed victims of our social disorder! How strong his faith in our government!

Of course, we are aware that the New York *Times* type of mind rejoices. In the clubs and Wall Street there will be applause; it will be once more explained that it is really humanitarianism to "treat 'em rough" at the start. A little early bloodshed will serve notice on the country that the regulars are loyal, that the government will stand no nonsense and will shoot to kill whenever trouble appears. That, we shall be told, will save a lot of bloodshed. We wonder. One cannot be too sure. Sometimes ruthlessness works the other way. The law-abiding people of Anacostia booed and hissed the troops, and so did some of those in the city's streets, when they saw the way they had behaved and the application of the torch—and the troops threw gas-bombs at them. The people of the United States will not take kindly to the sort of military rule they have been in the habit of calling Prussian. At least, however, they have clear warning of what may come to pass, how slight is the distance to a military dictatorship, and how ruthless it will be.

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Progress at Geneva

IN many respects we sympathize with the criticisms directed by Germany, Russia, and Italy against the Geneva arms conference, which took a six-months' adjournment on July 23. These governments pointed out that the conference had taken no step toward the reduction of armies and navies, and that it had failed to abolish "aggressive weapons," grant Germany juridical equality with France, or solve the Franco-Italian naval problem. As we said last week the outcome is on the whole a bitter disappointment. Nevertheless, the very fact that the conference has been able to accomplish something demonstrates that its efforts have not been wholly in vain. It should not be forgotten that these disarmament negotiations have taken place during one of the most critical periods in world history. Every country, gripped by the depression, has vainly attempted to protect itself by nationalistic measures whose only effect has been to create international animosity and to intensify the depression. Moreover, in the Orient a "war" has been fought between Japan and China, while in Latin America there have been renewed threats of war between Bolivia and Paraguay. In Europe new apprehensions have been aroused by the establishment of a Junker dictatorship in Germany and the high-handed overthrow of Social Democratic rule in Prussia.

Under such circumstances, it would have been easy for the arms conference to have adjourned in open bitterness and complete disagreement. Fortunately this result has been avoided. It is true that the conference has not concluded a general disarmament treaty; but it has adopted a number of important provisions which may be embodied in such a treaty when the conference reassembles next January. Thus, the governments have agreed to the abolition of all bombardment from the air—an extremely important provision, especially from the standpoint of civilian populations. They have sanctioned the French proposal for the internationalization of civil aviation, as the one effective means of preventing civilian craft from being converted to military use upon the outbreak of war. They have decided to limit the size of land artillery and tanks and to prohibit all forms of chemical, bacteriological, and incendiary warfare—all of which is good as far as it goes, but, if adopted, only makes war a little less horrible. Finally, they have agreed to establish a permanent disarmament commission to supervise the execution of the disarmament treaty, when finally completed, and to act as an organ of conciliation when any government believes that its security is threatened by the armaments of a neighboring power. During the next few months committees also are to study the best means of securing a reduction in the present size of armies and navies, of securing the limitation and reduction of military expenditure, and of controlling the private manufacture of arms. Although this list of accomplishments does not secure any immediate relief from the burden of armaments, the Geneva conference, we repeat, has succeeded in keeping alive the goal of disarmament in a period when it might easily have been abandoned, and in taking certain steps toward insuring that the goal eventually will be realized.

During the next six months the United States will have an opportunity to take three steps which in our judgment will greatly facilitate the work of the arms conference when it reconvenes. In the first place, the American Government should reexamine its naval and military policy to see whether it really conforms to the doctrine laid down by President Hoover that in view of the anti-war pact armaments must be used only for defense. It is clear to us that there is no danger threatening the "defenses" of the United States which justify building up to the parity levels of the London naval treaty. It is also clear to us that the simplest and most far-reaching means of securing naval reduction lies in abolishing the battleship. If England and Japan consent to such abolition, no one can argue that the United States should retain the battleship for "defensive" purposes. Likewise, the Hoover disarmament proposal of June 22 should be amended so as to discard the provision increasing the American army to 200,000 men. Congress should also radically amend the National Defense Act of 1920 under which the American army today consists of a skeletonized force, manned by an excessive number of officers, the purpose of which is to throw six field armies of 4,000,000 drafted men into Europe immediately upon the outbreak of war. The assumption that the American army is to be employed primarily in fighting battles in Europe is utterly inconsistent with the principles of the anti-war pact. The American army should be transformed into a genuine defense force, thus saving millions of dollars to the taxpayer and proving our sincerity.

Secondly, the United States should assist in strengthening the procedure for the pacific settlement of disputes. Until an adequate means of peacefully composing international difficulties is established, it is unlikely that the world will achieve a large measure of disarmament. *The Nation* does not believe that the United States should become involved in any system of international sanctions; but it does believe that it should work for the development of international organization, based upon pacifist principles. We hope therefore that President Hoover will send a strong delegation to the September Assembly of the League, to consider what joint action, short of the application of sanctions, should be taken upon the report of the Lytton commission concerning the Sino-Japanese dispute.

Finally, we again enthusiastically support Senator Borah in urging the American Government immediately to convene an international conference to attack world economic problems, including the cancelation of all war debts. A year ago no French cabinet would consider wiping out the Young plan because of fear of being immediately overthrown. Last month, however, M. Herriot, realizing the disastrous consequences of failing to settle the war-debt question, consented to the virtual abolition of reparations. The very audacity of the move changed the attitude of the whole world toward France and greatly strengthened M. Herriot's political position at home. Opposed as it is to a Republican victory this November, *The Nation* is frank to admit that Mr. Hoover's prospects for reelection would be greatly increased if he followed M. Herriot's example and made a bold effort at solving the international economic problems. Will Mr. Hoover have the courage and the imagination to act?

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"Only a Novel"

THE literary section in the current issue of *The Nation* is devoted especially to reviews of novels—commonly regarded as the "lightest" kind of reading and hence the most suitable to that season of the year when the mental energy of the population is supposed to be at its lowest ebb. Many generations of novelists have fought against the assumption that works composed in the genre which they cultivated were necessarily inferior to other forms of literature, and perhaps few people today really believe that they are, but prejudices die hard and there are a dozen conventional phrases still current which imply apology. Ask the average man with a book what he is reading and the chances are that he will reply, "Only a novel."

The truth of the matter is, however, that fiction is not merely the most popular form of *belles lettres;* it is also the one with which men live most intimately and by which they are most commonly and continuously influenced. The very artistic—and therefore artificial—perfection and beauty of the lyric or dramatic forms make them somewhat remote. The more admirable they are, the further away they seem, and it is not the greatest or the most enduring works of art, which, at any particular time, come most pertinently "home to men's hearts and bosoms." They lack the concreteness, the superficial verisimilitude, and the immediate relevance of the novel. They may exalt us and they may take us beyond or above the ordinary concerns of our daily life. But they do not, like the novel, make themselves a part of it to such an extent that what we read in, for example, a Theodore Dreiser or a Sinclair Lewis, seems merely an extension of our daily experience.

It was, indeed, out of the need for a literature of just this kind that the novel was born, and it did not at first know what to call itself. Defoe's proto-novels were merely fake memoirs. Richardson wrote his with the deliberate and avowed intention of illustrating his moral ideas by means of realistic fables. And if the novel soon freed itself from the narrowness of Richardson's mind it has remained surprisingly true to his fundamental conception, for it has usually been something either more or less than pure art.

For the very reason that the novel is "impure" it has been able to become the vehicle for many things. Every great social, or moral, or political enthusiasm has used it, and no inconsiderable part of its history might be written in terms of the "movements" which have employed it for their own purposes. It has been taken possession of time and time again by tactics similar to those now being employed by the Communists who are proclaiming that only "Marxian" novels ought to be taken seriously, and though it has always proved itself more enduring than any movement, much of its vitality has resulted from the fact that it could be thus taken possession of and used.

For this reason literary critics have tended either to distrust it or to reserve their praise for the rare examples of what they have been pleased to call "pure" novels—for Flaubert, perhaps, or, more recently, for André Gide or Marcel Proust. In them they have admired qualities not dissimilar to the qualities of great poetry or great drama—namely, style, detachment, unity, and harmony. Accordingly, they have proclaimed these the only real novels and, in a sense, they are right. But they have foolishly expected that they should also be the ones most read or admired, and they have forgotten that however admirable the virtues praised may be they are not the ones which the novel originally sought or the ones for which the novel has generally been read.

The stream of fiction is a muddy stream; it has borne along in its current all sorts of things which artistically should not be there. But it is largely because of these extraneous things that it has been read; largely because of them that it has exerted upon the lives and opinions of the public a more direct influence than that exerted by any other kind of writing. Poetry reflects and influences the deepest and subtlest of our feelings. From the poetry written in any age might possibly be deduced the spiritual state of the greatest spirits of that age. But the novel gives the very form and pressure of the time.

Primarily, in other words, we go to the novel less for art than for information and experience. In the case of no other form of literature does both the pleasure and the profit deducible from it depend so largely upon what we are being told and upon what we seem to be going through. In no other form do defects of almost any kind seem of so little importance provided only we are able to gain some sense of familiarity with a type of character, a way of life, or an attitude toward society with which we were unfamiliar before.

No one not ashamed to admit that his education is incomplete need apologize for reading "only a novel." No one who feels that there are things for him still to learn about the manners and thoughts of his contemporaries need think that he is wasting his time merely because he has turned from "serious" books to a piece of fiction, even though that piece of fiction may possibly be neither of permanent value nor of great artistic excellence. For art, precious and indispensable as it is, is not the only thing we live by or for. It represents the quintessence of experience and, sometimes, the transcending of experience, but experience is the crude stuff out of which it is made, and there is no form of literature which is so nearly the equivalent of experience as the novel.

Perhaps youth is and ought to be the time when most novels are read. Few mature men read them at the rate of one a day as many young men have done for a year or two at a time. Youth is, after all, the time when the need for experience is most acutely felt and the time when experience is most likely to seem capable of containing the answer to every vaguely felt need. Later one is more likely to realize that even the widest experience is unsatisfactory and, for that reason, to feel more and more strongly the charm of those purer forms of literature which so obviously provide more than vicarious experience. But few men are wise enough or experienced enough really to dispense with the novel, and whoever has given up reading it must confess that he has lost interest in the mere life of his times.

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The St. Lawrence Treaty

By RUTH FINNEY

Washington, July 26

NO issue with more fascinating possibilities than the new St. Lawrence treaty has ever been presented to the American people as the basis of a nation-wide political campaign. By advocating the treaty, a candidate may please some of the farmers, some of the railroads, some of the power companies, some of the municipalities concerned. By insisting that the treaty as it stands today has delayed rather than hastened final settlement of the St. Lawrence dispute, a candidate may strike a responsive chord among some of the farmers, some of the railroads, some of the utilities, some of the cities.

This treaty, which must be ratified by the United States Senate and the Canadian Parliament before becoming effective, is looked upon with favor by farmers in the northern block of midwestern States because they believe it will mean cheap transportation for their products. States a little farther south, which expect to benefit more from shipping their goods down the Mississippi, look at it askance, fearing it does not permit diversion of enough water from Lake Michigan to maintain a nine-foot channel in the river. Railroads and those who have invested in them do not enjoy the prospect of increased water transportation from the West. But that is true in regard to development of both the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi. Erie, Pennsylvania; Cleveland, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Gary, Indiana; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Duluth, Minnesota; and Chicago, Illinois, may all become deep-sea ports, open to 90 per cent of the world's ocean commerce, if the St. Lawrence waterway is opened. On the other hand, Buffalo, where all lake ships must now stop to transfer their cargoes, will lose much of its importance.

And then there is the question of hydro-electric power, a question full of ifs, ands, and buts. Cheap and plentiful power from the St. Lawrence would make possible electrification of the New York Central Railroad between Buffalo and New York, a contingency earnestly desired by that railroad since its competitor, the Pennsylvania, has undertaken extensive electrification work. The General Electric Company, close ally of the major utility groups, would supply the equipment for such a project. Construction of a generating plant by the State of New York, which can borrow money more readily and more cheaply than any corporation at present, would insure low-cost power to make the enterprise a success.

On the other hand, the State's plans for utilizing the St. Lawrence power call for development in a way that will "benefit the people of the State as a whole and particularly the domestic and rural consumers to whom the power can economically be made available." Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt and his Power Authority have been taking this provision seriously and laying plans for either selling power to a private utility company under contracts guaranteeing low rates to domestic and rural consumers, or distributing the power direct to municipal and district purchasers. The Niagara Hudson Power Corporation of the Morgan group of utilities, serves northern New York at present and urgently wants St. Lawrence power on its own terms, an aim it apparently will not accomplish while Roosevelt directs the policies of the State. It furthermore does not want a low-rate yardstick established in its territory.

On the other side of the international line, opinion is quite as much divided in regard to the treaty. The same conflict of interest exists there between farmers desiring cheap transportation and the railroads. Montreal, now an important shipping center, is unwilling to relinquish its importance to other cities farther west. And the power problem is just as complicated on that side of the line.

The St. Lawrence development will produce 2,200,000 horsepower of new hydro-electric energy. Half of this will belong to Canada and half to the United States. All of Canada's share will go to the Province of Ontario with its large and prosperous public power development and its low power rates. The share of the United States will all go to New York where Roosevelt's plans call for making cheap power available alike to industry and small consumers. Both facts are extremely distasteful to the Province of Quebec, where private power companies, some Canadian and some American, including the Aluminum Company of America, are strongly entrenched. Quebec has very low industrial power rates and has already lured a number of American firms desiring to take advantage of them across the line into the province. If low industrial power becomes available in New York, the advantage of moving to Canada obviously diminishes. So Premier Taschereau of Quebec denounces the treaty as "a national crime" and promises to block its ratification as long as possible.

The document which has been in the making for so many years and has caused such uproar upon completion, is a short, terse compact opening the way for construction of a twenty-seven-foot ship channel in the St. Lawrence River the entire distance between the Great Lakes and the sea, at a total cost of $543,429,000, including works for generation of power. Of this total cost, the treaty provides that $272,453,000 shall be borne by the United States and $270,976,000 by the Dominion of Canada. It allows credit for work already done in essential parts of the seaway, with the result that the United States must still expend $257,992,000 while Canada's share is $142,204,000.

Two important matters were in controversy between the two countries in addition to this allocation of costs, and on both of them the United States has surrendered to her northern neighbor. Canada was anxious that two power dams be built in the river instead of the one large dam recommended by United States engineers and particularly by engineers of the State of New York. Construction of one dam would have meant a greater amount of Canadian land flooded in the adjacent reservoir, and construction of dikes around a number of small Canadian towns. Construction of two dams adds approximately $70,000,000 to the cost of power generation, and almost doubles the cost of annual maintenance. Action of the United States in agreeing to the

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two-dam plan considerably increases the amount New York must expend as her share of the project.

The second matter in dispute concerned diversion of water from the Great Lakes. In the treaty the United States has consented that no waters shall be diverted without permission of the International Joint Commission beyond the 1,500 cubic-second feet for Chicago's drainage canal allowed by the United States Supreme Court. At the time the court's decision was handed down, construction of a nine-foot channel in the Mississippi River had not been undertaken, but the decision left the way open for discussion of further diversions of water. The treaty closes the door to this possibility, unless consent is given by the International Joint Commission, of which half the members are Canadians.

For over a year, New York has been asking the federal government to enter into an agreement with the State as to the share each shall pay of development work in the international section of the St. Lawrence. The Dominion of Canada entered into such an agreement with the Province of Ontario. After much supplication, the United States State Department began a series of conferences with members of the New York Power Authority looking to division of costs, but these conferences were broken off abruptly in June, with a statement that President Hoover would decide New York's share of the necessary expense. New York has heard nothing more from the federal government, and the treaty was signed with its status still undetermined.

For years, private power companies have turned greedy eyes toward the potential energy of the mighty St. Lawrence, but since that portion of it capable of power development constituted the international boundary between New York and Ontario, the State and the province have each asserted ownership of half the bed and banks of the river, though neither could make use of its property until Canada and the United States, with preeminent rights to control navigation, should agree on development of the river.

During the past few years, with such an agreement in sight, New York has taken definite steps, under guidance of Governor Roosevelt, to establish for all time its claim to this great resource and to develop it as a public project. Roosevelt's plans, furthermore, have called for cheap power for general use. At present, the average rate paid by domestic consumers in Canada, including both public and private power plants, is 2.29 cents a kilowatt hour. In the United States the average domestic rate is 6.03 cents a kilowatt hour. Differences on either side of the St. Lawrence are even more marked because Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission is in control of one bank of the river and Morgan-owned utilities are in control in New York.

Proceeding with this program, New York created a State Power Authority early in 1931 and directed it to generate New York's St. Lawrence power as soon as international negotiations permitted. Sale of this power, greater in quantity than the amounts capable of being generated at Boulder Dam and Muscle Shoals together, was to be made to private utility companies at the switchboard, and Governor Roosevelt promised New York that no sales would be made except by contracts guaranteeing low retail rates to domestic and rural consumers.

Since only one company, the Niagara Hudson Power Corporation, has lines extending to the St. Lawrence, Roosevelt announced an alternative plan providing for public distribution and sale of power if satisfactory contracts were not obtainable. He proposed to take advantage of New York laws permitting the State to designate utility transmission lines as common carriers, and thus assure distribution of St. Lawrence power without the expense of building public transmission lines. The final step in his alternative plan called for legislation permitting cities and rural districts to purchase power and distribute it locally.

The entire plan, however, was dependent in two respects upon action by the federal government. Construction could not start until navigation plans were completed and an international agreement reached. And construction could not profitably be undertaken at all if arrangements were made requiring New York to spend an excessive amount in generating power. The State had means at hand to control retail power prices, but first it would have to sell at wholesale prices great enough to cover costs of generating.

In view of this situation, Governor Roosevelt wrote to President Hoover in June, 1931, immediately upon creation of his Power Authority, asking that New York be represented in all negotiations concerning the St. Lawrence. A month later, having received nothing but a routine acknowledgment from the President, Frank P. Walsh, chairman of the Power Authority, wrote again, urging the necessity of conferences between the State and federal governments to settle their problems before negotiations were undertaken with Canada. Throughout the summer and early fall, New York continued to ask for conferences. Finally, on October 14, Walsh wrote to President Hoover pointing out that "the federal and provincial governments of Canada had reached a complete accord regarding issues corresponding to those upon which the Power Authority, representing the State of New York, feels it essential to seek an understanding with you."

Hoover referred the letter to the State Department, and on October 28 negotiations between the federal and State governments began. At that time, a member of the Canadian Parliament disclosed, treaty negotiations were already under way between his country and the United States. Scarcely had conferences between the Power Authority and the State Department been undertaken when the latter served notice that it would expect New York to pay $150,000,000 as its share of the St. Lawrence development. Members of the Power Authority protested that this amount exceeded the cost of all works for navigation and power on the American side of the river, would frustrate the purpose of the State to provide cheap electricity for homes and for industries, and would drive large American industrial concerns across the Canadian border. Negotiations continued through the winter and spring. Secretary of State Stimson, himself a New Yorker and member of the law firm of Winthrop, Stimson, Putnam, and Roberts, legal representatives of the Niagara Hudson Power Corporation, went to Geneva, leaving the conferences in charge of subordinates.

At length it was agreed orally, according to the Power Authority, that $150,000,000 was too large a sum to levy against New York. However, no alternative sum was agreed upon, and on June 7 of this year members of the Authority were suddenly notified that the policy of the federal government in all these matters would be decided by the President. Protests from the Power Authority against concluding a treaty with Canada before the domestic problem had been settled went unanswered. Word leaked out that the treaty

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was ready for signature. A telegram from Governor Roosevelt to President Hoover asking a conference before the matter was concluded met with curt and sarcastic refusal. Four days later Hoover announced that an agreement with Canada had been reached. His announcement, hastened apparently by Roosevelt's telegram, came the day before adjournment of Congress, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at once arranged for investigation of the whole affair during the fall recess. Governor Roosevelt expects to air his grievances before this committee and ask that Congress fix New York's contribution to the St. Lawrence project on an equitable basis before ratifying the treaty with Canada.

Southern Labor Stirs

By A. J. MUSTE

High Point, N. C., July 22

AT about eight o'clock on the evening before last I was standing with Lawrence Hogan, hero of the Marion strike of 1929 and southern representative of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, on the main street of this Carolina industrial center. A group of workers were unfolding to Hogan, whose appearance and talk marked him as a "native," the details of the "general strike" which had occurred the previous day. Suddenly we noticed a disturbance a block away. We found that a group of about twenty-five men, mainly young, had just forced their way into the Rialto moving-picture house, the finest in town, without paying any admission. They contended they were unemployed and without money, but nevertheless entitled to their movies! By the time we arrived at the theater enough State troopers had thundered up on motorcycles to stop further unpaid admission to the theater.

A few minutes later, as we stood on a near-by corner talking to some former Marion strikers who had moved to High Point, every light in the city suddenly went out. Every wheel operated by electric power had stopped. It was about fifteen minutes before light and power were turned on again. Next morning the papers explained that a fuse had blown out in the power station. It was a patent subterfuge; we learned for a certainty that trouble had occurred with the electric motor driving the machinery in the Diamond Hosiery Mill, one of those on strike. The version given by the unemployed was that some of their number, deprived of a chance to see the movies free, resorted to another form of direct action and ruined the motor in the hosiery plant "to teach the big fellows that we hain't going to stand for no more bad treatment."

High Point began its industrial career as a woodworking and furniture town. It experienced a post-war boom, the population rising from 14,000 in 1920 to nearly 40,000 today. In addition to expanding its furniture industry, it lured hosiery, cotton, and silk mills seeking to escape union conditions elsewhere. It claims 125 manufacturing plants with an output, before the crash, of $52,185,880 annually and a pay roll of $10,000,000 paid to approximately 12,000 industrial workers, the total gainfully occupied in the city amounting to nearly 17,000. Because of unemployment, short-time work, and repeated cuts, wages have almost reached the vanishing point. The furniture industry is "shot to pieces." A representative of the United States Department of Labor to whom I talked yesterday described it as "another one of these dying industries, the result of changes in the home life of Americans, the use of steel furniture in offices, and similar developments." Hosiery is perhaps a little better off, but a number of hosiery mills furnish only one or two days' work a week. Striking hosiery workers expressed themselves as able to live on a wage of $2 per day, provided they had five days' work per week. I had just left the head of the city welfare department who had shown me grocery orders of four dollars per week issued to a medium-sized family when I met a cotton-mill worker who had such a family to support and who told me she was making $4 for a 36-hour week. She went on to say that she might as well not be working at all. The same city official informed me that nearly 1,400 families, one-seventh or more of the total in the city, were on straight relief or being furnished work by the city.

This is the all-too-common story of a population being forced gradually toward starvation. The two factors had an important bearing on the "revolutionary" outburst early this week. The leading hosiery firm is the Adams-Millis. Mr. Millis is on the city council. Mr. Adams is the big gun. His company leads every wage-cutting move, then the others are "forced" to follow, and when the cut has gone the rounds, Mr. Adams begins another one. Mr. Adams is bitterly hated by all the workers. They tell you that he recently built a house costing $85,000 on property costing $65,000. There are indications that the townspeople generally share this feeling at least in a mild degree. Secondly, the furniture workers charge that many of them have been loafing for months because cheap labor was brought in from the farms to replace them. City authorities assert that they made special efforts to prevent this, and that most of the employers "cooperated splendidly," but they admit that the cooperation was not complete.

This was the set-up at the beginning of the week when the Guilford Hosiery Mills announced a further wage reduction. The workers in the boarding department promptly walked out, and the other departments followed suit. Like a flash, word spread to other hosiery plants and in one after another every single worker shut off his machine and went on strike. As the hosiery workers poured into the streets—there were between four and five thousand of them presently—a wave of excitement swept through the little city. There was not a family which was not directly affected. The unemployed furniture workers, nursing an old grievance against those who had taken their jobs, spontaneously marched to the furniture mills, overpowered guards, unceremoniously tossed a couple of protesting employers out of the windows of their own mills, and drove the workers into the streets. The cry went up to shut down every plant in town.

Next, the crowd marched to the Duke Power Company's plant and shut off the power. Some of the workers

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began calling Negro servants in private houses to come out on strike, and a few answered the call. Cars and buses were commandeered and the crowd went out to shut down hosiery and furniture mills in the surrounding towns, Thomasville, Kernersville, and Lexington. At this point a total of 150 plants had been shut down and 20,000 workers called out.

During the evening, crowds marched around the city having a gay time. There was talk of entering bakery and food stores, but nothing came of it. The authorities had advised business places and stores in the downtown section to close. State troopers were arriving in considerable numbers. Plainclothesmen had caused the arrest of a number of young fellows—"hoodlums," they were said to be—who had been especially active in closing down mills. The crowds were exhausted from excitement, and went to bed.

Here was a "general strike" in a conservative Southern city. Beyond doubt it was unpremeditated. There is no unionism in the town. No Communists had been active. Furthermore, the move was carried out by workers who consider themselves patriotic Americans, who are violently anti-red, who have been taught to regard strangers with suspicion, and who have no labor philosophy. Of course, policemen, state troopers, and detectives followed us about. But these paid guardians of law and order were less relentless in following our car with its New York license number than hosiery workers who didn't want any "outside agitators" "making trouble." They think it was because of the presence of "outside agitators" that shooting occurred at Gastonia and Marion in 1929. It was they who called the police to take Beulah Carter, a Durham hosiery worker sent into High Point as investigator by the Hosiery Workers Union, into custody and who were talking of running her out of town the next morning. Within the past few hours some Communist organizers have come into town and been arrested, and it is quite possible that a known Communist in High Point is safer behind the bars than on the streets in working-class neighborhoods.

My impression is that the city authorities have so far handled the situation cleverly. They have used no "rough stuff." They have built up a suspicion of any "outsider" who might advise the strikers, who are utterly inexperienced, although these same authorities state they would welcome an American Federation of Labor union. They have driven a wedge between the hosiery workers, the other trades, and the unemployed, so that the hosiery workers themselves urged the others to go back to work after the first day—which practically all of them did. The leader of the hosiery strikers, of whom there are now 5,000, has issued statements denouncing "hoodlumism," pledging maintenance of "law and order," stating that they have had no advice and leadership from outside and desire none. Privately he states that he realizes the need for organization, but that the time to talk about that will be when this strike is settled.

The employers, or at least most of them, have offered to rescind the recent wage cut, provided the workers agree to a survey of wages paid elsewhere in North Carolina and to accept a cut if the differential is proved to be unfavorable to High Point's competitive position. The workers answer that they know when their wages are not enough to buy food with, without surveying other towns, and are demanding that the wage scale of April 1 be restored. The recent cut was the second since that date.

Sex Wins in America

By MORRIS L. ERNST

FOR its first hundred years the United States was unafraid of sex. It was free of literary taboos except for a taboo against blasphemy. Though it did not approach sexual matters in any mood of high joy or open gaiety, nevertheless amorous excitement was a portion of literary diet even though accompanied by some of the feelings of a naughty boy hiding from his teacher. Those men who drafted our federal Constitution bulged their cheeks in naughty giggles when reading the works of Fielding or Sterne. The plays of Congreve were presented without expurgation. Sexual literature was openly sold in all the States and territories, and in all probability the manufacture and sale of so-called dirty postcards had not even made an appearance. Bootleggers were not known.

The very early tariff acts contained clauses intended to bar foreign obscenities. This manifestation was more anti-foreign than anti-sex. Public dress was, of course, strictly circumscribed—so strictly that in many portions of New England a maiden was not allowed to wear her hair in braids. It was too provocative to the youth of the land. But this was strictly Puritan—a reaching for outward decency and public conformity.

Up to 1870 neither the great classics of all languages nor the writings of contemporary authors were hauled off to the headquarters of vice agents in a frenzied search for material which might corrupt the young. Literary freedom was curtailed only for women, who were deemed unable to cope fully with the frankest literature of the day. White men were considered immune from corruption. The reading of Negroes was of course restricted. In some States it was made a crime to offer even a Bible to a Negro. The restrictions on both Negro and feminine reading were obviously attempts to preserve male, white supremacy.

And then around 1870 the lid was clamped down on matters of sex. A new era began. The name of Comstock has been indelibly attached to this second period. He was the leader. He was a symbol for all those who were sexually repressed. His diaries indicate the pathetic distress of an incurable analerotic. He suffered with a horrible guilt, all through life, when he felt that he had thus sinned against God. But his immediate backers were the wealthy bankers of the day. Delightful old harum-scarums like J. P. Morgan acted as founders of the Society for the Suppression of Vice.

Censorship spread over the land like a prairie fire. The government declared that use of the mails was a privilege and not a right of the people and that no obscenity should go into a mail pouch. State after State declared that

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obscene matter was illegal. But in not a single legislative hall was a definition of obscenity attempted.

The only specific, identified, objective ban was the one laid upon contraceptive information and apparatus. Up to 1870 the entire press had run advertisements of methods of birth control. Suddenly our American scene underwent a change. Contraceptives had to be smuggled into the offices of doctors and under the counters of drug-stores. Advice as to proficient and aesthetic methods of preventing conception was taboo even to the medical profession. This important field of public health acquired such bad odor that the medical profession became cowardly before the danger of being called lewd or obscene.

After 1870 the surreptitious printers began to flourish. In the period that followed, thousands of postcards depicting the sexual act in normal or in so-called perverted positions were printed and sold to men, women, and children. Books banned from the mails were in great demand. Condemned works sold at high prices and excessive profits. Theatrical products permitted all through the civilized world, even in England, were suppressed. "Sapho," "Mrs. Warren's Profession," "The Captive," "Maya," "God of Vengeance," excited the vice-hunters. Burlesque shows and semi-nude chorus girls were not interfered with, but "Strange Interlude" could not open in Boston. The works of Walt Whitman, freely distributed from 1855 to 1888, were suppressed in the latter year. The "Arabian Nights," the "Decameron," portions of the Bible separately printed, "Hagar Revelly," "Ulysses," and scores of other books were haled into court.

And in this clash of interests all of our reading became more frank. Not that we have yet come to the kind of bawdy and robustious sexual reading that Washington and Jefferson and Madison enjoyed—but we are on our way.

The vice-hunters acted as the advertising agents of sex. Several books that would have sold a paltry few thousand were printed in the tens of thousands because Mr. Sumner was shocked. Try as he would to keep the names of the attacked volumes out of his annual reports, the press spread the news, and by word of mouth people whispered about "The Well of Loneliness" or the Dennett pamphlet. The former became a Lesbian bible and sold in excess of 100,000 copies, and the demand for the latter kept pace with each step in the legal proceedings. Boston went on rampages. Hundreds of volumes were attacked in the Boston Book Massacres. "An American Tragedy" was convicted by a judge and jury, and the highest court of the State sustained the conviction.

Books and plays were the early windmills for our censors. And then came their great opportunity—the movies. Six States were persuaded to create political boards of official censors. Millions of feet of film were cut each year. In one State a hairpin was deleted—too stimulating to men in these days of bobbed hair. New York tries to ban pictures of corrupt politicians. Kansas says no liquor may be shown. Many decisions were oddly paradoxical. Massachusetts, convicting the salesman of Dreiser's "An American Tragedy," voted down State censorship of the movies. New York attacked Lesbian themes such as "The Well of Loneliness," but Boston never even batted an eye at female perversion. The federal courts acquitted the publisher of "Hagar Revelly" and the New York courts within three months condemned the book. Books were legal in Chicago but banned in New York, legal on a Tuesday and illegal on a Wednesday. The ban indices of the two great federal agencies—Post Office and Customs—seldom agreed. Y. M. C. A.'s ordered the Dennett pamphlet by the thousands, while the directors of these Y. M. C. A.'s, sitting as directors of vice societies, tried to suppress it.

Certain plays ran an entire season on Broadway and on tour, but a screen version of them was not allowed. Sexual material was permitted at times if sold in expensive bindings, but attacked if sold at two dollars a volume. The rich had either been corrupted or were not worth saving. Judges, clerks of the courts, and jurors seldom returned the copies of the books containing alleged obscenity presented in court by the vice societies. Liberals in the general fields of economic thought sided with the Comstocks in their crusades against sex. Walter Lippmann was the standard-bearer for some of the bitterest campaigns conducted against sex magazines and theatrical productions. Many who stood with Jefferson in his plea for a wide-open market in economic thought shied away from sex.

It is amazing that many people who belong to an organization such as the Civil Liberties Union are afraid of the right to spread sexual ideas. They endeavor to preserve their attitude of freedom of thought by opposing the obscenity laws, but are outraged by what they call "pornography." This they cannot define, but they accept its prosecution as a social need. There is plenty of hiding-space behind the weasel words of any law. The twilight zone between obscenity and pornography is beyond human vision. The creed of anarchy or the fighting gospel of communism, many liberals contend, should be allowed free dissemination. A change in government even by force holds no horrors for them. Let everyone express his ideas without any interference. The danger to the State is slight, and even if it were great, did not Jefferson say that a revolution every decade or so is good fertilizer for a vital commonwealth? But men and women, their sexual libidos—hush, hush, there you will find danger. The hearth, the young are threatened. Men may not go home to their wives, and wives may be educated up to a curiosity about diverse sexual experience. Very few men in or out of the scientific professions have stood up in the community and shouted: "Where is the proof that any of this sexual material is injurious? Is it not merely a matter of taste? Can obscenity be defined, and if defined, is it not a word of subjective, changing content? Is a specific voltage of sex to be allowed in a book, and on the silver screen a smaller dose? And what about the famous First Amendment to the Constitution, called the Bill of Rights, which we all have been brought up to think guarantees complete freedom of thought?"

For nearly sixty years the Constitution was forgotten. The Supreme Court had been shocked by the Comstock exhibits of 1870. The mails were closed to obscenity; this in spite of the fact that in 1835 Clay, Calhoun, and Webster had all declared in stirring Senate debate that any censorship of the mails was not only unconstitutional but highly dangerous. But that occurred when an attempt was being made to use the mail censorship in order to prevent Abolitionist literature from seeping into the South.

The Supreme Court whittled away a large hunk of the Constitution when the censorship of the movies was sustained. On that occasion the hedging was more difficult.

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It had to go so far as to say that the movies had nothing to do with ideas, that the screen was merely an exhibit, like a flea circus, and hence any State could license and regulate and censor to its heart's desire. Six States and many cities have done so. Pictures portraying pacifists have been banned in Pennsylvania and New York, which has virtually destroyed their national market. Ridicule of Volsteadism is not permitted. The movie censors have persistently censored ideas.

For nearly fifty years, from 1870 to 1920, campaigns were waged against everything connected with sex. Thousands of dollars were poured into the vice societies. Police officers were prodded into action by these extra-legal agencies, which were often endowed with special powers and at times were authorized to retain a portion of the fines resulting in cases in which they had been the entrappers. But the tide swept on. From the Comstock point of view the citizens were rushing faster and faster to purgatory. The censors failed to recognize that the styles in obscenity had changed even as women on bathing beaches had dropped off their flounced sleeves and their cotton stockings. One-piece suits appeared on the beaches and in our novels.

And then in true American fashion the first real signs of a shift appeared. We have always been a people of anarchistic tendencies. Law has never been sacred. We nullify whenever the lawgivers, judges, or legislators hand us a statute not to our liking. We even agree with Emerson that immoral legislation should be disregarded. For a time nullification is quiet and orderly. We profess admiration for laws which may protect others, but like the censors of books we are certain that we ourselves cannot be harmed. And then comes a time when the courts balk at the hypocrisy of the land. Judges and jurors cannot longer subscribe to oaths of office and see the laws flouted. And from the benches come the decisions which whittle away the objectionable statutes. Thus do the courts reinterpret so as to save us from further open defiance. Many courts, after 1915, started to sense the mood of the people. Judges were in a devil of a pickle. What they condemned one summer they found on the newsstands the following winter. "Three Weeks," by Elinor Glynn, was suppressed in Boston by the highest jurists. One year later, if they reread it, they must have wondered what they had been shocked at. Legal decisions affecting literature were overridden by the people.

Since 1915 the leading vice agency of the United States, the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, has failed to gain a conviction in a single case where a book was published with an established publisher's imprint or where the book had been openly sold by the retailers and reviewed by the press. In other words, acceptance by the ordinary book trade and book public was regarded by the court as a standard in testing obscenity. The testimony or the blush of a paid attorney for a vice society was no longer convincing. "Hagar Revelly" was the turning-point. Since that conviction the vice societies' victories have been restricted to surreptitious prints, postcards, little scraps of paper stealthily disseminated by people with a sense of guilt.

Let us look at the battlefield and the lines the Comstocks have withdrawn to. They attacked Gautier's "Mlle de Maupin." After a bitter struggle the court held the book to be a classic—legal and pure, even though the highest court of New York had commented on the fact that the avowed purpose of the volume was to make light of virtue and to glorify fornication. The clerk who had been arrested sued, and recovered several thousand dollars from the society for false arrest and malicious prosecution. Cabell's "Jurgen" was next brought on the mat. One of the ablest criminal judges declared it to be immune. It was too sophisticated. Too few persons would understand its subtleties. Petronius's "Satyricon" was haled into court. A long opinion was handed down. This was aged in the wood. It was pre-Comstock stuff, hence legal. "A Young Girl's Diary" and "Women in Love" received honorable mention from the judges. Juries were bored by the reading of "Replenishing Jessica," and length and boredom were accepted as reasons for immunity. "The Well of Loneliness" dealt with homosexuality. The theme shocked the censors. But our wise judges refused to condemn any book on its theme alone. Mary Ware Dennett sold thousands of copies of her pamphlet, "The Sex Side of Life," dealing among other things with the subjects of masturbation and venereal disease. The pamphlet even said that the sexual act was the greatest physical joy of man. Without setting up possible alternatives, the censors threatened Mrs. Dennett with jail. A jury conviction had to be overturned by the judges of the Circuit Court of Appeals. Sex education took a big spurt.

After ten years of suppression a new attempt was made to legalize Schnitzler's "Casanova's Homecoming." A magistrate said that times had changed, but the vice agents still thought that maybe the grand jurors would not agree with such heresy. A grand jury read the book and refused to indict. The book was cleared. Dr. Marie Stopes's books were the cause of many men and women going to jail a decade ago. But in 1931 not only was "Married Love" (it sold 700,000 in England) allowed into the United States, but the federal courts permitted the importation of the author's other books, "Wise Parenthood," "5,000 Cases," and "Contraception." What were we coming to? "Contraception" is a book giving pictures of various contraceptive devices. For decades the medical profession had believed that the best European knowledge on the subject of birth control must be smuggled into this land of the free. The bootleggers of the standard works of Holland, Germany, and England were promptly put out of business by this decision of Federal Judge Woolsey. And to cap the climax, the federal authorities have generously and wisely admitted "The Sex Factor in Marriage." This book, written by Dr. Helena M. Wright and sold for two dollars, treats of sex as a joy and a gay thing. The pleasure motif is the chief consideration of the author. The book is not a classic. It is not old. It is not sophisticated. It is not technical. It is not a bore. And still it is openly sold.

Frank sexual-education tracts may be legally sent through the mails. Homosexuality is an admitted theme. Books dealing with birth control may be imported. Contraceptives may be sent through the mails to doctors or druggists if for prevention of disease as well as for prevention of birth. Classics encouraging infidelity have been approved by our high courts. Crudities of expression, scatological references, have been held to be neither lewd nor lascivious. The campaigns of the sex-hunters in the United States are virtually at an end unless the vender of the picture or the tract enters the courtroom with an air of guilt and with the taint of stealth.

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Explaining to Dmitri

Ex-Prince Dmitri Vichovich
4268 Third Avenue
Leningrad, U. S. S. R.

DEAR DMITRI: I have your letter asking me to explain to you the political situation that affronts, as you so neatly phrase it, the American people. I shall do my best, but you must understand that I am confronted with a grave difficulty: that of not understanding it myself. You have probably confused me with Walter Lippmann, who explains everything in the New York *Herald Tribune*. Mr. Lippmann explains everything to everybody's satisfaction, with the possible exception of the man who writes the *Herald Tribune* editorials. Either the latter gentleman does not read Mr. Lippmann (which is, of course, incredible) or he isn't convinced by what he reads (which is even more incredible). Most incredible of all, however, are the editorials the gentleman writes for the *Herald Tribune*. These are so incredible that nobody understands them, not even Mr. Lippmann, though he would probably venture to explain them anyway.

But, *Gott sei dank*, you have not asked me to explain the *Herald Tribune* editorials or Mr. Lippmann, and I am duly grateful. You want to know what has taken place in the arena of American politics, and I shall try to give you a brief summary.

Practically all the conventions (including the Culbertson two-bid) have been held, and the list of the simple homespun nominees is truly formidable. The G. O. P. (which you must not confuse with your own dear G. P. U.: the G. P. U., as I understand it, puts people out of their misery quickly, whereas the G. O. P. prefers the slow torture of starvation) has nominated Herbert Hoover again. He is, of course, the logical candidate, having done nothing at all in the past four years. During his administration, his personal fortune has shrunk from four million dollars to seven hundred thousand. If these figures mean anything, in four years more Mr. Hoover should be able to leave the White House and take up permanent residence in the Poor House. This gives the American people as fine a chance for revenge as they have had in years, and the Republicans are counting heavily on this motive to keep them in power.

The Democratic convention was enlivened by a "Stop-Roosevelt" movement. We shall not know until November just how successful this movement was, but the general impression is that anti-Roosevelt men scored a triumph when they succeeded in nominating John Nance Garner as Roosevelt's running mate. It is a little too early to tell in which direction Roosevelt is running—toward Garner or away from him, though a study of Roosevelt's previous tactics leads me to believe that he is not running, but straddling. He straddles as well as Mr. Hoover, and, from any distance at all, it is almost impossible to tell them apart. This point is being taken advantage of by the Republican propagandists, who keep asking "Why change Hoovers going downstream?"

Immediately after his nomination, Mr. Roosevelt flew to Chicago, and then made a trip in a small boat along the New England shore line. This seems to prove beyond a doubt that he is physically fit to cope with the problems of the Presidency. Only his mental fitness for the office is now open to question. Mr. Farley, his campaign manager, insists, however, that Roosevelt is eminently qualified to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors, Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover, and there may be something to what he says.

The Socialist Party nominated Norman Thomas, who has none of the false pride that occasionally pops up in American nominees. If it's a Presidential year, he runs for President; if it's just a gubernatorial year, he runs for governor. Mr. Thomas will poll a large vote, including mine, which usually goes to Al Smith. But the fact that Thomas is the ablest of the candidates will count heavily against him. The American people have a tradition to maintain, and you can rely on them to maintain it. Heywood Broun is not running this year, but may do a show instead. Those who saw Broun's last show want him to stick to his political career, but, after all, there are no chorus girls in politics.

The Communists are going to have a ticket in the field, but you, naturally, know more about that than I do. I doubt that they have a chance, as the only Communists in America are those who are beaten up by the police, and when the police get through, a Communist is lucky if he can register, let alone vote.

The Prohibitionists had a convention, but have not nominated anybody permanently yet. They are dickering with Borah, but you know what happens to anybody that dickers with Borah. It is true that Borah is not satisfied with the Republican prohibition plank. Neither, however, was Nicholas Murray Butler. But the difference between the two men is that Borah, though dissatisfied, decided to remain in Washington; Dr. Butler, immediately after the convention, sailed for Paris, where he had no difficulty in putting through a wet plank. You can say what you want about Dr. Butler (unless, of course, you're a student at Columbia) but he's nobody's fool.

Some other items may interest you: Senator Norris has come out for Roosevelt, but then even Achilles had his heel. . . . Mrs. Roosevelt will edit a magazine for babies. This I take to be a tactical error, as babies can't vote. . . . And young Jimmy Roosevelt has shown that blood will tell by issuing a statement on one day and denying it the next. . . . Paul Block is not expected to cut Jimmy Walker's salary for 1933, as the proposed reduction is to apply only to city employees. . . . And Julius Klein, of the Department of Commerce, has issued another statement to the effect that business is better. Dr. Klein's statements, like those of the department stores, are issued on the first of every month, but you can take 98 per cent off. This tops Macy's by quite a bit.

Well, there's the news. I hope you can make something out of it. Give my regards to Sonia, Petrovich, Babushka, and the others. And tell them not to worry about us. There is no depression here. Out of 120,000,000 people fully 100,000,000 are still working.

Yours, etc.,

MORRIE RYSKIND

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In the Driftway

COLONEL Frederick Stuart Greene, New York State Superintendent of Public Works, has recently been upheld by Judge Pound of the Court of Appeals in his two-year fight to keep the Perlmutter Furniture Company from blotting out a large section of the landscape with a huge billboard. The billboard in this case was set up for the edification of travelers approaching a beautiful new bridge which Colonel Greene had just finished superintending; and it is easy to understand that Colonel Greene felt as badly at having his new bridge violated by Mr. Perlmutter's billboard as an early American connoisseur would feel at having one of Mr. Perlmutter's overstuffed Grand Rapids sofas set down within the chaste paneled walls of his eighteenth-century living room. Colonel Greene not only felt badly. He got very mad, and since the land on which the billboard stood was private property, he decided to build, on State property in front of the sign, a lattice-work screen in the exact proportions of the billboard.

* * * * *

THE injunction with which the beast, in the guise of the Perlmutter Furniture Company, sought to estop beauty, in the person of Colonel Greene, was upheld in a lower court. But in a higher court, beauty won, as we have come not to expect. "No adjacent property-owner," ruled Judge Pound, "has the vested right to be seen from the street in his back-yard privacy." And this extraordinary decision ended with the following sentences: "Beauty may not be a queen, but she is not an outcast beyond the pale of protection or respect. She may at least shelter herself under the wings of safety, morality, or decency."

* * * * *

JUDGE Pound's decision is not the first one of its kind. Another judge in another part of the country has only recently discovered a paradoxical thing called the public's privacy, and has ruled that billboards have no right to invade it. The implications of both decisions are amusing and startling to contemplate. If Colonel Greene can protect his highways from billboards why cannot the Drifter rid his varied path not only of all the trade names and claims which now scream at him as he goes by, but also of the architectural monstrosities, large and small, which line that path from Maine to California? We shall soon be reading of property-owners "taking the rap" for perpetrating a horrible bungalow, and the Drifter knows of at least three service stations whose owners he would like to have sent up. The day may even come when the innocent bystander can hale into court one of those crimson-nailed, gum-chewing denizens of our public thoroughfares and prosecute her on the grounds of violating the aesthetic Bill of Rights, firm in the knowledge that the American Civil Liberties Union will see him through to the Supreme Court if that is necessary. It is true, of course, that a new species of censorship based upon beauty would work hardships on certain worthy causes. Nine out of ten nudists, for instance, would be banned, not because they were indecent, but because they were plain to the point of illegality. THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

God Save Us, Indeed!

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Surely Paul Y. Anderson is much too generous when he writes that "No one whose cerebral development exceeds that of a soft-shell crab could possibly listen to the proceedings for ten minutes without being impressed with their trashy and degrading character." For like most radio bunk, the conventions were broadcast because people like that sort of thing.

One might argue that had the recent movement to broadcast murder trials been successful, its effect would have been to debunk sensationalism in our courts, or that our scandal sheets debunk rather than promote scandal and scandal-mongering. But the tragic fact remains that thousands of *intelligent* men and women, stimulated by mob excitement, were enchanted by what they already knew to be political bunkum.

God save us from television!

Los Angeles, Cal., July 7 H. JEFFERY SMITH

The Doom of Pessimism

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In his review of "The Doom of Youth," by Wyndham Lewis, Joseph Wood Krutch observes that a very distinct advantage of Lewis's ideological system, so far as its "pure entertainment value" is concerned, is its unpredictability—as compared, for example, with Marxism, since "one always knows what a Marxian is going to say." Does this mean that Mr. Krutch is prepared to expound a seriously Marxian interpretation of any phenomenon under the sun—of Greek mythology, let us say, or Shakespeare's tragedies, or Tolstoy, or Abraham Lincoln, or the American Civil War (to mention only subjects on which eminent Marxians have made observations)? Or does Mr. Krutch's remark mean anything at all—except that Mr. Krutch himself is not a Marxian? Is an irresponsible unpredictability, in his eyes, the test of a sound ideological system? And would he recognize the possibility that might be tempted to feel, no matter how unjustly, that after decades of corrupt self-pity and complacent world-weariness one always knows exactly what a romantic and pessimistic individualist is going to say?

Northampton, Mass., June 29 NEWTON ARVIN

Against War

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Among all the international conferences of recent years on war, the forthcoming congress called for August 20 to 22 by a committee of distinguished European writers holds out hope of vigorous action on a new united front. Headed by Romain Rolland, Albert Einstein, Henri Barbusse, and George Bernard Shaw, it has already organized a formidable support.

An American committee has been formed to organize the American delegation, with Theodore Dreiser as its chairman. Fifty delegates are wanted. Will *Nation* readers who have friends in Europe planning to be in or not far from Paris August 20 to 22, advise them to get in touch with the Congress headquarters? The address is Kampfkongress gegen den imperialistischen Krieg, Berlin-Charlottenburg 4, Schlüterstrasse 33, Germany. Full information will be sent from there.

New York, July 31 ROGER BALDWIN

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Books

Prelude

By CONRAD AIKEN

And there I saw the seed upon the mountain
but it was not a seed it was a star
but it was not a star it was a world
but it was not a world it was a god
but it was not a god it was a laughter

blood red within and lightning for its rind
the root came out like gold and it was anger
the root came out like fire and it was fury
the root came out like horn and it was purpose
but it was not a root it was a hand

destructive strong and eager full of blood
and broke the rocks and set them on each other
and broke the waters into shafts of light
and set them end to end and made them seas
and out of laughter wrung a grief of water

and thus beneath the web of mind I saw
under the west and east of web I saw
under the bloodshot spawn of stars I saw
under the water and the inarticulate laughter
the coiling down the coiling in the coiling

mean and intense and furious and secret
profound and evil and dispatched in darkness
shot homeward foully in a filth of effort
clotted and quick and thick and without aim
spasm of concentration of the sea

and there I saw the seed upon the shore
but it was not a seed it was a man
but it was not a man it was a god
magnificent and humble in the morning
with angels poised upon his either hand.

Kaoru the Incompetent

The Lady of the Boat. Being the Fifth Part of The Tale of Genji. By Lady Murasaki. Translated from the Japanese by Arthur Waley. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

ONE of the most amazing things about Lady Murasaki's masterpiece is that it gets better as it goes along. One might have guessed that the cries of praise which critics sent up over the first volume several years ago would be followed, as new volumes appeared, either by qualification or by silence. But no such thing. Each instalment has been given its special superlative, and there can be no doubt that this fifth one will in its own way demand—and get—encomiums.

One reason for all this might seem to be that Lady Murasaki worked on every page of her story with the greatest care. Though long it is unpadded. There will be more than half a million words of it by the time the sixth and last volume is here; yet it would be difficult to open the work anywhere and find it slow or meaningless, or anything indeed but compact almost to the point of epigram. The conversations are everywhere dramatic; the landscapes are always as precise as the finest prints; and the story never pauses for an instant, though it may charmingly digress.

The only other reason would be the old one of genius, and I suppose it is the best. It is difficult to believe that anybody who could not write like this by nature could ever learn to do so by art. Art is long, but not that long. Or at any rate it is true that in all the time during which westerners have written novels they have not advanced to the combination of qualities which this Japanese lady achieved with apparent ease a thousand years ago. Even Proust, who has been compared with her in an attempt to prove that she deserves high place, could have learned from her, if he could have learned from anybody, to keep somewhat nearer than he did to the human center. Possessing all of his subtlety, and—unless it is Mr. Waley's English that should be praised here—possessing all of his resources in language, she has in addition that kind of sympathy which can be found more often in persons who are not at all clever than it can in persons like herself, and she has a beautiful abundance of common sense. She is quite as fascinated by manners, quite as addicted to the aristocracy, as Proust; yet her reader never feels that he is being conducted through a mob of gilded eccentrics. Her people may not be the kind one knows, yet each of them, no matter how remote his manners, becomes immediately familiar and remains a friend.

"The Lady of the Boat" begins after the death of Genji, who as hero held the preceding four parts together. The interest is now divided between two young men, Kaoru, Genji's reputed son, and Niou, his grandson. But Lady Murasaki, far from being handicapped by this multiplication of heroes, gains by it, since she knows so well how to distinguish between Kaoru and Niou and how to play them off against each other. Both of them are exquisite and captivating gentlemen with whom every Japanese lady falls in love, yet they are as different as Hamlet and Casanova, Kaoru being rendered incompetent in gallantry by a certain seriousness which makes him hanker after monkhood, and Niou being saved from the appearance of promiscuity only by a delicacy which matches his impetuosity. The volume is concerned chiefly with the love of these heroes for two sisters, Agemaki and Kozeri, who themselves are scrupulously distinguished—though, since ladies are more alike in romance than gentlemen are, an even finer brush is required to draw the line between them. The story of these four is isolated by a masterful stroke of art from the other great story which runs through the "Genji" series like a mural background. This other story is thronged with people, and is in effect the history of a whole court, the incessant bustle of which is always audible above the murmuring of whatever lovers may occupy the foreground at a given moment. The resulting harmony is something which only the greatest novelists have been able to create—which only a great novelist, indeed, ever thinks of attempting. The lesser novelist may exhibit his ingenuity in the devices he employs to make his characters few; but he misses the ultimate triumph when he shuts the multitude away, for the multitude is mankind.

Readers may wonder whether Kaoru, whose reluctance to lose himself in love is made so perfectly clear, ever experiences the passion for Agemaki which Lady Murasaki says he does. If this passion is not credible, then the book does have one fault. But the wisdom of its sentences, the excellence of the poems which are scattered everywhere through it, the brilliance of its landscapes, the warmth of its wit, and the depth of its understanding will more than make up for any such detail. And Mr. Waley's English will be always a reason for reading farther.

MARK VAN DOREN

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Men of the Sea

Three Fevers. By Leo Walmsley. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

LEO WALMSLEY'S English fishermen are simple people, and his account of their lives is limited almost entirely to their activities at sea and to their work preparing equipment ashore. Occasionally, it is true, he shows one or another of them at home, but they seem somewhat stagy there, and ill at ease, as though they were conscious of being watched; bantering their womenfolk, drinking tea, or commenting about the weather, they seem determined to behave as one feels fishermen at home should behave. The real drama of their lives, the author seems to say, or at least any drama worth writing about, is not in their domestic or financial or sexual problems, but in the nature of the work they do. The three fevers that grip them are cod fever, lobster fever, and salmon fever, each attacking the members of the Lunn family (and all the fishermen on the coast) before the last has entirely spent itself, and each bringing its special complications and its special dangers. Mr. Walmsley evidently knows these risks and complications, and the people who share them, very intimately. He seems to draw upon a great store of technical information for his effects; if we are a little vague about the essential differences between his characters, for example, by the time the book is finished, the various and frequent storms they endure are sharply differentiated. And to show how one storm differs from another is perhaps more difficult than to indicate the differences between people—at any rate, it is a more unusual accomplishment. When it is said that the descriptions of simple manual tasks—of launching the boats, of drawing in the nets or the lobster pots—are cleverly and clearly given, with a minimum of waste on the technical explanations, the outstanding features of this first novel are roughly stated.

What is significant is that the author, admiring the recklessness and daring of his characters, communicating his admiration and the reasons for it with great skill, reveals no such daring in his approach to the physically safer, mentally more precarious occupation of writing. He describes at great length Marney's determination in drawing in the last line while a storm is threatening them all, and he lets the reader know what risks (of which the fishermen are clearly conscious) lie behind this determination, but he draws back from the emotional crises of his characters' lives with a caution he would presumably despise if his characters revealed it. So he edges away from conflicts—other than that of man against nature—whenever they threaten, taking refuge in an off-at-a-tangent comment, or in a blank, impersonalized observation; or he solves a dilemma too easily by changing the subject. And so, too, he checks the flights of fancy and the minor extravagances that disturb his patient, detached realism. The loss is all the more apparent because such modest attempts as he gives are invariably pleasing:

> For a time we were silent. Despite that, we were conscious of the approaching wind and its significance, we watched the line coming on board with undivided interest. The fascination of a fisherman's life is that he reaps his harvest from an unseen world through whose insecure and perilous crust he throws down his sacrificial gifts for a reward that may be small, or may be great, but is always uncertain.

This is a long way from the imaginative daring that threatens "Moby Dick" on every page, but it is at least similar in kind. There are enough of these passages to indicate that much may be expected from Mr. Walmsley if he will bring to his own craft some of the recklessness he admires in another.

ROBERT CANTWELL

The Crisis Stands

The Crisis of Capitalism in America. By M. J. Bonn. The John Day Company. $2.50.

> The crisis was ultimately due to the misuse of capital. The savings which the production surplus has yielded, or was expected to yield, had been spent in the construction of new production plants of constantly increasing capacity, in the hope that the consumers on whose behalf this vast apparatus was to operate would grow up automatically. The capitalist world in which we live has formed the habit of conveying credit, the elasticity of which is exceedingly large, mainly into channels of production. It is still obsessed by the pre-capitalistic notion that consumption is an evil which represents a more or less unavoidable kind of extravagance. Apart from consumer-financing which constitutes only a comparatively small part of total consumption, the fact remains that production is over and over again expanded with the aid of credit derived from or built up on savings—in particular, by the construction or expansion of costly plants which can turn out goods as cheaply as estimates proclaim only if they are fully employed—whereas consumption is left to itself. . . . So it comes about that production is governed mainly by technical considerations, and far outsteps consumption both in time and quantity, since it has secured for itself technical perfection, but not financial success.

SO Professor Bonn describes the cancer at the heart of capitalism. To my mind, and to the mind of a gathering number of students, it is a sound diagnosis. Capitalism in the sense of a system devoted to the saving and investment of private capital seems to have about run its historical course. Capital has accumulated, in the form of cement, steel, lumber, bricks, machines, and serialized processes, to a point where we have approximately all of it we need for a high standard of living in America, and far more of it than the domestic market can absorb in terms of purchasing power. This applies to booms as well as to slumps. Looking abroad for other markets, we find lumber, cement, and steel piling up not only in Europe, but in Asia, South Africa, South America, Japan, and Russia—in some countries already in excess of the domestic market. There are new factories all over the old dumping grounds. Part of our recent prosperity was due to the producers' goods we sold to build and equip these factories.

What good is a pile of capital if there is no place, broadly speaking, to invest it profitably? The civilized world after one hundred and fifty years of thrift, savings, self denial, and financial buccaneering has built its capital structure. The job is done. The next great historical move obviously is to use the structure at approximate capacity to throw off consumers' goods.

This means more income for consumers and less for savings and reinvestment. Such is the only formula which the future can utilize. But it is a formula alien, heretical, and self-destructive to capitalism as such. Capitalism can only accept it by ceasing to be capitalism and turning into—shall we say?—consumerism. Capitalism has never given a damn for the purchasing power of consumers, but has kept the machine going by providing jobs through expanding the industrial structure. The structure is now overexpanded, and the capitalistic formula has run out; or, to be more precise, the structure has exceeded the limit of market demand, and the formula is about to run out. (There may be one more business cycle in it, or there may not.)

Crisis, indeed. Professor Bonn does not carry his argument quite to the point indicated above, but his analysis moves remorselessly in that direction. To quote again:

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> America has behaved in much the same way as did German industry when it borrowed so heavily. Both saw only one-half of a period of time: the half during which, with the aid of credits, one creates new production plants and therewith furnishes work, pays wages, reaps profits, and gives new impetus to production. Meanwhile they completely forget the second half of the period, during which the new factories ought to be producing, but, owing to the restricted marketing potentialities, are unable to do so to the full extent. In place of the hoped for low working costs, they are burdened with comparatively high capital charges and high working costs. . . . So long as this false financing was going on, it helped bring about a trade boom.

Professor Bonn, like J. A. Hobson, knows what he is talking about. His book is clear, penetrating, and sound. It tells America what is the matter with her, and in doing so tells capitalism what is the matter with it. An alternative title might have been "Tombstone for a Dying System." He propounds no remedies, an honest course to take, for there are not any. We can, of course, bury the corpse and change the system. This thought, however, our good professor does little more than hint at.

As I write, the stock market heaves upward, commodity prices increase spottily, employment gains in a plant here and a plant there. Defenders of the old formula are on their knees praying that the corner has been rounded. Perhaps it has. What of it? A little relief; a few deep breaths; a flurry of speculation. The market for producers' goods has reached its approximate ceiling. Nothing has been done, or can be done under the old formula, to broaden and stabilize the base of consumption. Back of flurry, optimism, and temporary activity, implacably the crisis stands.

STUART CHASE

A Romantic Note

The Devil Is an English Gentleman. By John Cournos. Farrar and Rinehart. Two volumes. $3.75.

OBSERVERS of the swing of the literary pendulum have confidently been awaiting the emergence of a new romanticism; a romanticism chastened by the bitterness of realism, but still throbbing with that infinitely satisfactory vitality that comes with its akinness to the intensely human world of ideal dreams. The lugubrious barrages issuing from the neo-humanists ensconced in their academic fortresses have apparently resulted more in deafness than conviction, and every faint tinkle of a romantic note is the more refreshing if for no other reason than the pleasant contrast.

The pain of a realism that approached a sadistic limit has paved the way for a new romance. John Cournos's "The Devil Is an English Gentleman" is an attempt to do away with that pain, or, in other words, to follow the new trend. He has written two romantic volumes, but unfortunately, instead of taking into consideration the realistic epoch that shattered the purple dream of the Victorians, he has simply resurrected it, even to the obnoxious color. Like Ernest Dowson, Mr. Cournos in a mild way would like to fling roses riotously with the throng, but he has forgotten that the roses of that vintage smell mostly of decay.

Mr. Cournos has conceived a romantic plot of noble proportions. He has gathered together the lives of three generations of English gentlemen. He has interpreted them in terms of their loves. Their dreams and their individuality are the basic texture of his work. Their growth and decay is the growth and decay of their single personalities. The self of his characters develops from within, oblivious to external abstract

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forces and circumstances. Their self is the whole, and all that matters.

Yet, as Mr. Cournos unfolds his people, or rather lets them unfold themselves, one is increasingly conscious of the fact that these are not beings created by an insight looking from the perspective of post-realism. They are rather the reflections of one who has tried to restore a dead romanticism that grew too lush and went to seed in terms of realities that it tried to hide. The characters of Mr. Cournos find themselves in situations which could develop into a new individualism and a new romanticism compatible with the present. Instead of following this excellent possibility, he is content to drag Thaddeus of Warsaw out of his deserved grave, set him down in red plush drawing rooms and let him exchange stilted profundities with sad-eyed females—and all of this with considerable tiresome verbosity that ends in a tennis match between once-impassioned lovers and ex-almost mistresses.

H. A. Brinser

Two Against the World

The Rueful Mating. By G. B. Stern. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

G. B. STERN'S newest novel has been warmly praised by reviewers as intelligent and discriminating as Rebecca West and Lewis Gannett, and many bookstores class it with "The Good Earth" and "The Fountain" as a best seller. It concerns a little girl, Halcyon Day, who at the age of twelve was fêted and spoiled in New York as a child prodigy given to the production of dreadful tripe miscalled poetry, the forcible removal of that child by a disgusted English father to a good healthy English background where he fervently hoped she would soon "find her level," her growing-up, and marriage.

It is possible that the author seized upon this story as a useful vehicle for poking fun at all the various English methods of educating good healthy little girls, and at all the different adult attitudes toward that strange creature whom Agnes De Lima once aptly called "Our Enemy, the Child." The ridiculous elements of any hoary institution, often accepted as uncritically by those accustomed to them as we accept our skyscrapers and chewing gum, are immediately apparent to an outsider. Halcyon was an outsider by virtue of her precocious notoriety which had removed her from the companionship and pursuits of childhood, and by virtue of her four years' residence in New York. The concussion that she made upon the good healthy English background to which her father brashly transported her, and the concussion that that background made upon her, furnish Miss Stern with abundant opportunities for the humorous exposure of the worst elements in the English system and the worst consequences of being a child prodigy. The value of this exposure is somewhat marred by Miss Stern's hearty liking for caricature. The stodgy unimaginativeness of Captain Day and his sisters is as boundless as is the fatuity of New York worshiping its twelve-year-old celebrity; and one gathers at times that Miss Stern confuses the state of being a child prodigy in America with the state of being a child in America. Nevertheless, the diligent reader will find numerous clever jabs at a good healthy English childhood and at American sentimentality. But 184,000 words seem to me rather more than a writer as accomplished as Miss Stern should take for an exposition that could have been more effectively made in a magazine article.

One must assume, therefore, that she was writing a good, solid, substantial novel, one of those enchanting books that can go on and on forever because they create a world of their own, a world in which the reader finds excitement or emotion, or surcease from his own world. Such a book must make one believe in it, whether as reality or fantasy. And here again I am at a loss. The quite improbable plot might well be supposed to represent a child's wish-fulfilment dream, an escape from the cut and dried responsibilities of life. And yet the impossibly good and noble, if prankish and diverting Eden, a child actor whom Halcyon fortunately encounters soon after her arrival in England and whose path thereafter crisscrosses hers by courtesy of a large number of coincidences, this noble Eden is represented as attaining his nobility as a result of unfaltering devotion to the realities of duty.

And here, apparently, we encounter the central theme of the book, the essential flimsiness of a spoiled little girl who is an awfully good sport but whose aspirations outrun her experience, and the essential nobility of the child supporter of a family who never forgets duty and so bounds into fame. This theme embedded in something very long, whether a wish-fulfilment fantasy, or a good substantial novel, or a satire on Parents Versus Children, I'm not sure which, is aided on its course by a large assortment of whimsical people who somehow don't seem to come alive in spite of skilful tricks of showmanship, by a large assortment of unexpected happenings, and by a nice selection of sensitively rendered English scenes. But for this reviewer these concomitants do not fuse together into a world.

Alice Beal Parsons

Shorter Notices

Gingertown. By Claude McKay. Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

Claude McKay approaches the problems of the American Negro, in novels, poems, and short stories, realistically. He does not plead for his people. He is not so much trying to win sympathy for them from the outside as he is attempting to reveal them to themselves. "Gingertown" is a collection of short stories which those who enjoyed "Home to Harlem" will want to read. Here there is a wider range of subject material; and there are several different backgrounds—Harlem, Jamaica, Broadway, homes, churches, and cabarets. No one of these stories is as good as "Home to Harlem"; but there can be no question that McKay stands in the front rank of the writers of the so-called Negro literary awakening. The arrangement is unusual; in general, the stories grow increasingly better as one reads the book through.

Fathers of Their People. By H. W. Freeman. Henry Holt and Company. $2.50.

The author of "Joseph and His Brethren" has gathered under one title what are, in actuality, a series of short stories about Suffolk farm characters. The stories are idyllic, and even if they are not profound and moving they possess a pastoral warmth which is effectively sustained for retrospect by the sudden explosion of the war at the end of the book.

The Book of Living Verse. English and American Poetry from the Thirteenth Century to the Present Day. Edited by Louis Untermeyer. Harcourt Brace and Co. $2.50.

Mr. Untermeyer forestalls criticism of his selection of poems for this book by telling us that the intent of this collection "is immediate and intuitive instead of analytic," that he offers here poetry which he believes to be "living" regardless of its period or of its subject matter. "Living verse" has for the editor that combination (as well as communication) of passion and personality which is, for him, a touchstone of passion. The collection is not for scholars, but for those "who lack intimacy with the great body of English and American poetry or immediate leisure to pursue the acquaintance." Mr. Untermeyer

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is offering, in other words, a short-cut to an appreciation of poetry through bringing together in one volume the lyrics (and the poems are almost all lyrics) which because of mood, subject matter, or beauty of form, or all three, have long been enjoyed by students of poetry.

With respect to the earlier periods, Mr. Untermeyer's selection was really made for him; this poetry has been in anthologies over and over again, and Mr. Untermeyer has shown little inclination to vary the selection. As for the poetry of modern times included here, we have the editor's own judgment as to what is best, and the selection is somewhat curious. There are some rather startling exclusions and some rather startling inclusions. Humbert Wolfe is well represented; Louise Bogan, a much finer poet than most, is not included. The book represents Mr. Untermeyer's feeling for what is "living verse"—the feeling of Mr. Untermeyer and of the earlier editors of anthologies.

The Running Footman, or the Sentimental Servant. By John Owen. The Macmillan Company. $2.

When the great lords of England had young men to run before their carriages in all manner of weather, it is to be supposed that the state of the young men's lungs would be pitiable; even more pitiable would be the state of affection of young men who were considered lowly in the servants' hall. For of course such young men would love slightly above their station. Upon these threads a not very interesting story is woven, in a style which is wordy to little purpose. There is no reason why the novel might not have been historically sharp and keen, but the events run so quickly into heavy sentimentality, which the subtitle anticipates but does not excuse, that the footman's last race is not harrowing but only pointless.

Mrs. Taylor. By Marjorie Worthington. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.

What happens to a proper and well-to-do American woman in the prime of life when she loses her successful husband? Nothing; she simply continues being proper and well-to-do, and in due time accumulates another successful husband. "Mrs. Taylor" is a cold, meticulous, and not in the least improbable portrait of such a woman, well content with her fine suburban home, her servants, her garden, her smart clothes, her baths, her bridge parties—a sterile woman, but of course one of the very best people, afraid of nothing but life itself and capable of everything except grandeur and ignominy. Mrs. Worthington's novel is to be commended for its faithfulness of portrait and for its simplicity and precision of style, but lacking as it does any suggestion of social criticism or moral evaluation it falls short of genuine distinction.

The Getting of Wisdom. By Henry Handel Richardson. W. W. Norton and Company. $2.50.

Originally published in 1910, "The Getting of Wisdom" bears the hall-mark of the author of "The Fortunes of Richard Mahony." One understands how so quiet a story laid in a girls' boarding school in Austria passed almost unnoticed, its exquisite profundity unappreciated, its psychological insight missed in the simplicity of the tale which has no dramatic high spots. In the light of the great trilogy and of that fine musician's novel, "Maurice Guest," recently revived, it yields its rich significance. It is worthy to stand beside those others, for, though far less ambitious in scope, it achieves an equal perfection. Little Laura is a child of imagination without sentimentality, of intellectual realism without practicality. She is proud and feels that she is superior, as, potentially, she is. She is also the shameless opportunist. She suffers; she toadies; she has her short-lived triumphs and her painful humiliations. She is forever out of step with the staid commonplaceness of her surroundings. She is the ugly duckling, the passionate child. She is a true daughter of Richard Mahony with some of Mary's blood in her system.

Lives. By Gustav Eckstein. Illustrated from line drawings by Hokurai. Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

In his biography of Noguchi, Dr. Eckstein revealed himself as a writer of individual mind and manner. "Lives," which bares the privacies of a family of rats, a macaw, a pigeon, three turtles, nine canaries, a gardener, and some cockroaches, gives evidence that in Dr. Eckstein, if he chooses to cultivate this field, America has in reserve a scientific writer far above the measure of a William Beebe. "Lives" is continuously delightful for its alert observation, its buoyant wit, its jaunty style.

The Mexican Immigrant—His Life-Story. By Manual Gamio. University of Chicago Press. $3.

Here is one of the important books for those who desire to understand our southern neighbors. It supplements Dr. Gamio's previous scholarly volume, "Mexican Immigration to the United States," with seventy-seven personal narratives of Mexicans who for one reason or other came to the United States, tell why, and what they found here. It is, in short, a series of human documents—the "confession" idea served up with the wisdom of an ethnologist and under the academic *imprimatur.*

Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters. By Ray Stannard Baker. Vols. III, IV. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $10.

The third and fourth volumes of Mr. Baker's biography cover the years of Wilson's governorship of New Jersey and his first administration as President down to the opening of the World War. Aside from the abundance of detail with which Mr. Baker, drawing upon the great collection of Wilson's pa-

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pers, illuminates nearly the whole of this period (there is less about the Baltimore convention, the subsequent campaign, and Wilson's controversy with McCombs, his party manager, than was to have been expected), the volumes are particularly important for the light they throw upon Wilson's systematic preparation for political office, his conception of a dominating personal leadership, his unwillingness to be drawn into the Progressive movement, his skilful handling of Bryan, his aloofness from practical politics and lack of concern for campaign machinery, his readiness to talk down to the crowd as the Presidential campaign approached its end, the unfavorable impression which his campaign speeches made upon business men and financiers, the weakness of his first Cabinet, and his amazing declaration regarding American foreign policy. On these, as on other matters, Mr. Baker allows himself a freedom and frankness in criticism which contrasts rather strikingly with the reticence of his previous volumes, and his criticisms are prevailingly just. On the other hand, his depreciation of the influence of Colonel House in the campaign of 1912, while perhaps warranted, suggests at least a touch of bias. The volumes leave Wilson's character and leadership still a problem.

Contributors to This Issue

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ROBERT CANTWELL is author of "Laugh and Lie Down."

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